

Teens and Dating Violence

Dating violence is a pattern of controlling behaviors that one partner uses to get power over the other, and it includes:

- Any kind of physical violence or threat of physical violence to get control
- Emotional or mental abuse, such as playing mind games, making you feel crazy, or constantly putting you down or criticizing you
- Sexual abuse, including making you do anything you don't want to, refusing to have safe sex or making you feel badly about yourself sexually

Does your boyfriend:

- Have a history of bad relationships or past violence; always blames his/her problems on other people; or blames you for "making" him/her treat you badly?
- Try to use drugs or alcohol to coerce you or get you alone when you don't want to be?
- Try to control you by being bossy, not taking your opinion seriously or making all of the decisions about who you see, what you wear, what you do, etc.?
- Talk negatively about people in sexual ways or talk about sex like it's a game or contest?

Do you:

- Feel less confident about yourself when you're with him/her?
- Feel scared or worried about doing or saying "the wrong thing?"
- Find yourself changing your behavior out of fear or to avoid a fight?

Dating violence is more than just arguing or fighting.

Teens who abuse their girlfriends or boyfriends do the same things that adults who abuse their partners do. Teen dating violence is just as serious as adult domestic violence.

Teens are seriously at risk for dating violence. Research shows that physical or sexual abuse is a part of 1 in 3 high school relationships.

In 95% of abusive relationships, men abuse women. However, young women can be violent, and young men can also be victims. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gendered teens are just as at risk for abuse in their relationships as anyone else.

Abusive relationships have good times and bad times. Part of what makes dating violence so confusing and painful is that there is love mixed with the abuse. This can make it hard to tell if you are really being abused.

Unfortunately, without help, the violence will only get worse. If you think you may be in an abusive relationship, please call the [National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline](#) to talk with someone about it.

You can also call the Hotline for more information about dating violence or other resources for teens. Their number is 1-866-331-9474 or TTY 1-800-331-8453. To find out more about safety planning to help you keep you safe, [click here](#).